

Signing cycle networks (draft)

February 2015



About Sustrans

Sustrans makes smarter travel choices possible, desirable and inevitable. We're a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.

It's time we all began making smarter travel choices. Make your move and support Sustrans today.
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Contents

This chapter of the Sustrans Design Manual should be read in conjunction with Chapter 1 "Principles and processes for cycle friendly design." That chapter includes key guidance on core design principles, whether to integrate with or segregate from motor traffic, the space required by cyclists and other road users as well as geometrical considerations. Readers are also directed towards the "Handbook for cycle-friendly design" which contains a concise illustrated compendium of the technical guidance contained in the Design Manual. This chapter has initially been issued as a draft and it is intended that it be reviewed during 2015; feedback on the content is invited and should be made by 31 May 2015 to designandconstruction@sustrans.org.uk

1. **Key principles**
2. **Introduction**
3. **What to consider**
4. **Legal information**
5. **Directional signs**
6. **Instructions for cyclists**
7. **Signing shared use areas**
8. **Rural signs**
9. **Thermoplastic and painted markings**
10. **Diversions / temporary signing**
11. **References**

1. Key principles

- clear signing of cycling and walking routes and networks is essential if we are to encourage more people to use them
- direction signing should be continuous in both directions
- destinations and distances/times should be included on signs at frequent locations along a route
- direction signing should be clearly visible to cyclists following a route, reassuring them that they are on the right route
- strategically placed signs can encourage non-cyclists to think about alternative ways to travel. However, care is needed to avoid encouraging car drivers to follow these as a scenic route to their destination
- signing highlights to drivers that cyclists are likely to be present along a certain road
- signing can be used to direct cyclists away from hazards, such as busy road junctions, and create pleasant and safe routes for them to explore
- design of signing should minimise street clutter and be sensitive to the environment in which it is placed

2. Introduction

2.1

Comprehensive destination signing plays a key role in the development of safe and attractive places to cycle. Signs are an essential part of any cycle route and great care must be taken when considering their design and placement. They must provide clear, reliable information and at the same time must be appropriate and sensitive to their environment. A balance must be struck between sufficient signage and the visual clutter and maintenance liability that signing can cause. Surface markings may provide a useful alternative to post mounted signs.

2.2

Cycle specific route signing serves several purposes:

- routes for cyclists may differ from those for motor traffic
- gives cyclists good directions
- improves cyclist safety and comfort
- raises awareness of cyclists amongst other road users
- promotes cycle routes to other road users (particularly where times are used)

2.3

Sustrans Technical Information Note 5 (TIN5) provides detailed guidance on cycle network signing; this chapter highlights some key considerations and examples but TIN5 should be referred to for further detail.

3. What to consider

3.1

All signing should be:

- high quality
- coherent
- consistent
- frequent
- well maintained
- appropriate

3.2

Traffic free linear routes should be signed at each end, with gateways to highlight a route, and any links and destinations along the way should also be signed. Linear routes can be the spine to any network – include clear signing of links up to 1 mile away. Knowing where you are on the road network in an urban areas is straightforward but traffic free routes take people on different journeys and it is easy to become disorientated, even in a place you know well.

3.3

When direction signing a route, particular consideration should be given to:

- adding distances, or if appropriate, journey times; use of times on signs can encourage new or non-cyclists to use them
- merge signs together to avoid street clutter, mount new signs on existing posts, walls, railings etc
- sign key destinations such as schools, employers, shops, railway stations
- consider everything as a potential destination - some may be seasonal
- use square posts rather than round – they are harder to vandalise
- consider use of on road markings as an alternative to upright signs and posts, but ensure that markings are kept in good condition
- sign cycle parking – especially in urban centres
- the visual impact of signing proposed

4. Legal information

4.1

Signs for cycle routes on highways are included in the DfT Traffic Signs Regulations & General Directions (TSRGD) 2002 (for England, Wales, Scotland and the Isle of Man), the Traffic Signs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 and the DfT Traffic Signs Manual (for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) – together subsequently referred to as “Highway Sign Regulations”. Amendments to TSRGD were published in 2011 along with the results of a major review of traffic signs in Signing the Way. A full revision of TSRGD is expected in 2015.

4.2

TSRGD applies to all public highways (which includes public footpaths and bridleways as well as roads) - to quote Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 1: "1.18 The use on Public highways of non-prescribed signs which have not been authorised by, or on behalf of, the Secretary of State, is illegal and Authorities who so use unauthorised signs act beyond their powers. Additionally, an unauthorised sign in the highway is an obstruction. The possible consequences of erecting or permitting the erection of obstructions may be severe and those responsible could lay themselves open to a claim for damages; for example if the obstruction is the cause of accident or of injury in a collision or if the unauthorised sign injuriously affects a fronting property by blocking light or impairing visual amenity."

4.3

Usually only signs included in statutory guidance are permitted for use on cycle routes on the public highway however DfT authorisation can be obtained for using alternative signs for particular locations (Transport Scotland and the Welsh Government will do this in their areas). Some local authorities depart from statutory guidance without obtaining DfT authorisation on the grounds of safety, having assessed any risk and being specific to local situations.

4.4

Local authorities can also approach DfT to authorise trials of innovative signing, with a view to it being included in future amendments to TSRGD if it proved to be effective.

4.5

Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) are sometimes required to implement signs on highways (generally where vehicle restrictions are imposed). These are issued by highway authorities. TROs can be "permanent", "temporary" (usually up to 18 months, e.g. for construction works) or "experimental" (where the public response to the effects of the order needs to be evaluated). The London Cycling Design Standards (see references) have more information on this procedure.

4.6

There are no regulations governing the installation of signage for off-highway routes e.g. along canals, in parks or crossing private land. In principle any sign may be used with the approval of the land owner. This gives the opportunity to use standard highway signs or variations or other types of signs like mileposts, local maps etc. Anybody who has approval from the land owner may put up signs away from highways.

4.7

Sustrans provides volunteer rangers with route stickers to provide temporary signing along a route, where the local authority or land owner is in agreement, pending the erection of permanent signs.

5. Directional signs

5.1

Directional signs for cyclists work in the same way as they do for motorists. Signs located within the highway are normally blue, routes that are allocated a National Cycle Network number have a red square with white numbering included.

5.2

Directional signs should be located frequently along a route and advertise key destinations and distances or times at regular intervals. Linear routes such as those following rivers or old railway alignments should have the end point and at least one other location shown together with a distance.

5.3

Directional signing on traffic free routes needs to ensure that users understand where they are; an old railway corridor will often pass under or over roads that are familiar, but from an unfamiliar orientation. Paint, number or identify each road crossed or accessed on a small plaque to help users find their location.



Dewsbury



Shrewsbury



Shrewsbury



Liverpool



Times on sign, Aylesbury



EuroVelo route, Wales



Whiteabbey



Harpenden

5.4

All signs within the TSRGD are allocated a “diagram” number (drawing number), common numbers for directional signs are 2601.1, 2602.1 and 2602.2. The signs can be adapted to add pedestrian and horse symbols where appropriate. If a route has a particular name then that can be included as well.

5.5

In order to reduce street clutter it is sometimes practical to combine cycle network information with general road network information. The designs for these signs fall under numbers 2105.1 and 2106.1.

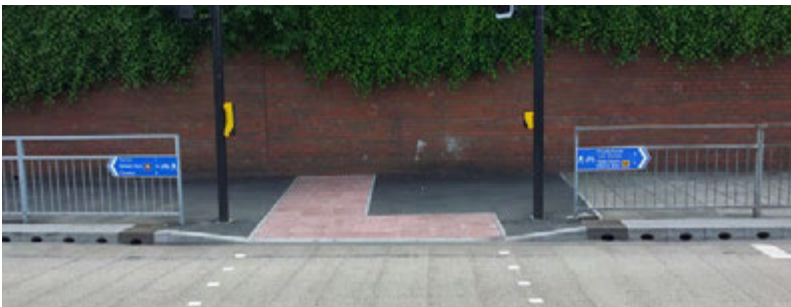
5.6

Refer to Sustrans Technical Information Note 5 for further detailed information about network signing.

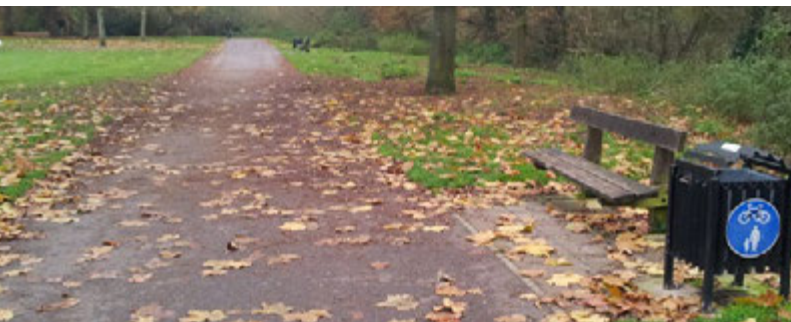
5.7

Signing should aim to avoid creating street clutter and consideration should be given to:

- using existing street furniture to fix signs to, such as guard railing, litter bins etc
- combining signs together on a single backing plate
- using smaller text heights as permitted



Port of Tyne



Southampton



Harold Wood



Ballymoney

Case study:

Cambridge City Council has developed a methodology for involving stakeholders that is outlined below:

- local stakeholders were involved from the outset choosing how and what was signed
- stakeholders also helped with identifying signing locations and producing the sign removal schedule, along with the site photos with sign to be removed identified
- they considered times to locations but decided that distances were best. Times to locations will be included on info boards and local maps
- as with vehicle signs, they have gone for main localities - a mixture of wards, and other locally important key destinations - agreed through the stakeholders
- they went through an iterative process to identify the associated local destinations and what would need to be signed locally
- signing was for local wards, via the city centre if appropriate route-wise. From there, other main destinations can be picked up. Villages beyond Cambridge are signed from the adjacent main city destination
- main destinations are signed by 'standard' white on blue signs. Local destinations signed using white on black signs (non compliant with TSRGD)
- 'x' height is reduced to 25mm (non compliant with TSRGD)
- guidance on mounting configurations provided so as to avoid masking
- guidance on signing for 'sensitive' areas where a standard post might be inappropriate
- cost of £70K for about 670 signs to complete the Cambridge network



6. Instructions for cyclists

6.1

As far as practicable, features along a route should be self-explanatory, thus reducing the need for signs. Where it is appropriate to provide instructions for cyclists:

- ensure that instructions are clear and can be understood
- keep signing clear from overhanging vegetation
- combine cycle movements with other speed control features around crossing points
- clearly sign diversions – and ensure that they give the same level of priority
- do not use Cyclists Dismount or End of Route signs



Kenilworth



Bermondsey



Hamilton



Heywood



Rochdale



Middleton

7. Signing shared use areas

7.1

On shared use routes all users are expected to show common courtesy to others; however in some locations there will be reasons to reinforce this with signing. In such situations the following points need to be considered:

- ensure that instructions are clear and can be understood
- poorly signed or misunderstood shared space generates conflict between users
- include a code of conduct on information signing



8. Rural signing

8.1

The type and location of signing should be sensitive to the area. Softer styles are acceptable, especially in sensitive areas away from the highway where blue highway signs would be out of character

- merge road signs in rural areas to include motorised and non-motorised modes of transport
- if equestrian use is expected, or allowed, then sign for it
- use materials in keeping with the surroundings



Bexhill



Birmingham



Cambridge



Oxfordshire



Cumbria

9. Thermoplastic and painted markings

9.1

These are alternative ways of signing routes to cyclists, and making motorists aware of a cycle route. Road markings are classed as “traffic signs” and are covered under the same regulations. Painted signs need to remain legible to all road users.



Chatelherault



Larkhall



Merthyr Tydfil



Sale



Swindon



Bristol

10. Diversions and temporary signs

10.1

Where route diversions are in place suitable signing of alternative routes should be provided using black on yellow.

10.2

Where a route is not lit consider signing of an alternative route via lit streets.

10.3

Sustrans route stickers can be used to provide temporary signing of a route, with the agreement of the local authority/land owner, pending the erection of permanent signs.



Flood diversion route, Exeter



Alternative 'after dark' route, Colchester

11. References

Department for Transport (2014) Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions Consultation Draft

Sustrans (2013) Cycle Network Signing, Technical Information Note 5

TfL (2014) London Cycling Design Standards

Welsh Government (2014) Design Guidance